Universal Religion.

MAY, 1905.

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SOME RESULTS OF THE COMPARISON OF RELIGIONS.*

Prof. Otto Pfleiderer, D. D.

The comparative study of the history of religions has carried us to a series of important results:

1. The Christian Church, with its dogma of the divine inspiration of the Bible, does not stand alone. Before and after Christianity other religions made exactly the same claims for their sacred Scriptures. By the pious Brahman the Veda is regarded as infallible and eternal; he believes the hymns of the old seers were not composed by the seers themselves, but were taken from an original copy in heaven. The Buddhist sees in the sayings of his sacred book, "Dhammapadam," the exact inheritance of the infallible words of his omniscient teacher Buddha. For the confessor of Ahuramazda the Zendavesta contains the Scriptural revelation of the good spirits unto the prophet Zarathustra. According to the rabbis the laws revealed unto Moses on Mount Sinai were even before the creation of the world the object of the observation of God. For the faithful Mohammedan the Koran is the copy of an ever present original in heaven, the contents of which were dictated word for word

*Part of an address delivered at the Congress of Arts and Sciences in St. Louis, Mo., Sept. 21st, 1904.

to Mohammed by the angel Gabriel. Whoever ponders the similar claims of all these religions for the infallibility of their sacred books, to him it becomes difficult to hold the dogma of the Christian Church concerning the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible as alone true and the similar documents of other religions as being false. Rather he will accept the view that in all these examples there are found the same motives of the religious mind, that here is given an expression to the same need common to all seeking for an absolute and abiding basis for their faith.

2. The study of the comparison of religions has discovered in religions other than that of Christianity many very striking parallels to many narratives and teachings of the Bible. It may be well to recall very briefly some of the important points. Owing to the fact that the Assyrian cuneiform writings have now been deciphered, there has been found a story of the creation which has many characteristics in common with those of the Bible. There is found a story of the flood, which in its very details can be regarded as the forerunner of the story of the flood in the Bible. There have been found Assyrian penitential psalms, which, in consciousness of guilt and in earnestness of prayer for forgiveness, can well be compared with many psalms of the Bible. Recently the code of a Babylonian king, Hammurabi, who reigned 2,300 years before Christ has been discovered. The similarity of this code with many of the early Mosaic laws has called general attention to this fact. In the Persian religion there are found teachings of the kingdom of God, of the good spirits who surround the throne of God, of the spirit hostile to God and of an army of his demons, of the judgment of each soul after death, of a heaven with eternal light, and of a dark abyss of hell, of the future struggle of the multitudes of good and bad spirits and the victory over the bad through the divine hero and savior, of the general resurrection of the dead, of the awful destruction of the world and the creation of a new and better world—teachings which are also found in the later Jewish theology and apocalypses, so that the acceptance of a dependence of Jewish upon corresponding Persian teaching

can hardly be avoided. Also Grecian influence is observed in later Jewish literature, in Proverbs, in the Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach, especially in the Alexandrian Jewish theology which found Platonic thoughts of an eternal, ideal world, of the heavenly home of the soul, and the Stoic conception of a world-ruling divine Logos.

It is from this source that the Logos to which Plato had already ascribed the meaning of the Son of God and the bringer of a divine revelation, crossed over into Christian theology and became the foundation of the dogma of the Church concerning the person of Christ. Of still greater importance than even all these was the opening of the Indian, and especially the Buddhistic religious writings. In these we have, five hundred years before Christianity, the revelation of redemptive religion, resting upon the ethical foundation of the abnegation of self and the withdrawal from the world. In the center of this religion is Gautama Buddha, the ideal teacher of redeeming truth, whose human life was adorned by the faith of his followers with a crown of wonderful legends; from an abode in heaven, out of mercy to the world, he descended unto the world, conceived and born of a virgin mother, created and entertained by heavenly spirits, recognized beforehand by a pious seer as the redeemer of the world; as a youth he manifested a wisdom beyond that of his teachers. Then, after the reception of an illuminating revelation, he victoriously overcomes the temptation of the devil, who would cause him to become faithless to his call to redemption. Then he begins to preach of the coming of the Kingdom of Justice, and sends forth his disciples, two by two, as messengers of his gospel to all people. Altho he declares that it is not his calling to perform miracles, nevertheless the legends indeed tell how many sick he healed, how with the contents of a small basket hundreds were fed, how possessed of all knowledge he reveals hidden things, how overcoming the limitations of time and space, swaying in the air, being transfigured in a heavenly light, he reveals himself to his disciples just before his death. And at last in the faith of his followers, having passed from the position of a human teacher to that of an eternal heavenly spirit and Lord of the world, he is exalted as the object of prayer and reverence to

many millions of the human race in Southern and Eastern Asia.

It is hardly possible that the knowledge of this parallel from India to the New Testament and of the Babylonian and Persian parallel to the Old Testament can be without influence upon the religious thought of Christian people. Altho we may be ever so much convinced concerning the essential superiority of our religion over all other religions, nevertheless the dogmatic contrast between absolute truth on the one side and complete falsity on the other can no more be maintained. In place of this view there must enter the view of the relative grade of differences between the higher and lower stages of development. No longer can we see in other religions only mistakes and fiction, but, under the husks of their legends, many precious kernels of truth must be seen, expressions of inner religious feelings and of noble ethical sentiments. One should, therefore, accept the position not to object to the same discrimination between husk and kernel in the matter of one's own religion, and to recognize in its inherited traditions and dogmas legendary elements, the explanation of which is to be found in psychical motives and in historical surroundings, even as they are found in the corresponding parts of religions other than the Christian religion.

"WHAT WAS HIS CREED?"

By Samuel Brazier.

There was a man; his soul was true,
His judgment incorrupt, his mind
Bowed only at the shrine of truth,
His heart was warm, his manners kind.
He strove to do his duty well.
What was his creed? I cannot tell.

At times his pure and happy life
A calm and even current ran;
Then care, and grief, and pain, and wrong
Made his the common lot of man.
But, good or ill, he bore it well.
What was his creed? I cannot tell.

For faults and errors of mankind
Reproaches bitter he disdained.
The base, the cruel and the false
His stern and fearless censure gained.
The Golden Rule he practiced well.
What was his creed? I cannot tell.

His love of man, active, unfeigned,
By narrow limits unconfined,
O'erspread the bounds of nation, race,
And faith, embracing all mankind.
For man as man he labored well.
What was his creed? I cannot tell.

A generous portion of his means
And time and strength he gladly gave
For others' weal—the poor to bless,
The sad to cheer, the lost to save;
Prizing his life to spend it well.
What was his creed? I cannot tell.

Wisely he lived, and when he died
The stranger had a word of praise;
And many heedless paused to think,
And many turned to better ways,
And those who differed loved him well.
What was his creed? I cannot tell.

Like the sweet scent of flowers dead,
Like the soft light of sunset sky,
His memory lived, and many said:
"How sad that such a man should die!"
They knew his worth who knew him well.
What was his creed? I cannot tell.

Note—It must be understood that the following remarks refer exclusively to religion in England proper. In Wales, and in Scotland are to be found aspirations, convictions and energies which differ greatly, both in quantity and quality, from those current in England, and certainly require wholly independent consideration.

RELIGION IN ENGLAND.*

Martin R. Smith.

The last thing that Englishmen care to talk about is their "religion," and it requires some diplomacy to induce them to bare their thoughts upon the subject. As the result of much inquiry one point has made itself amply clear to me, viz.: that the advanced Biblical and theological criticism of the last few years has profoundly affected religious thought among our young men, for it has led them to believe that the theological dogmas they were taught as children are unreasonable, morally indefensible, and devoid of historical basis.

These views are so widely held by them that it is hardly possible to talk on the subject to any young Englishman without discovering that he laughs at the idea of a personal devil, of eternal punishment, and of a "scheme of salvation." Naturally the first effect of this enlightenment is to make them wholly irreligious—frankly and quite happily irreligious—but they are not "Agnostic."

Agnosticism is, I suppose, the stepping stone over which many men must pass from the old religion to the new; but, I am grateful to say, that it is rare among our young men. Atheism is yet more rare; you might almost say non-existent—and when such views are propounded the are generally met by a silence more expressive and condemnatory than words.

Our young men are very irreligious, I must allow, but they are not Agnostic. Their strong English common-sense saves them from it and assures them that a universe, in which science has discovered law, order and purpose, must have an Author of supreme omniscience.

I do not think that I am far wrong when I describe their present attitude as one of "expectation." They are waiting—perhaps, for the most part, "idly" waiting— for new theological conceptions which shall be agreeable to their knowledge and intelligence.

Modern criticism has, of course, had a much greater effect upon our young men than upon the middle-aged or old, for, in the first place, the energy and curiosity of the young lead them

to read books of Biblical criticism which an older man would pass by, mainly upon the ground that "he does not want his opinions disturbed." Nevertheless, these opinions have become strangely modified of late, for reason has made good her claim in England to interfere with theology, and thousands on thousands hold a creed now far more liberal, far more enlightened than the faith they were taught as children.

Although they have gained so much freedom of thought, the vast majority of middle-aged English men and women still cling to Jesus—still trust in Jesus as their sole hope of salvation; still worship him as equal to, and one with, the Eternal God. Their reason is not troubled, their religious convictions are in no way disturbed by hostile criticism, however trenchant and convincing. The reason is not far to seek. Speaking broadly, the church has wisely given up, in great measure, the old hopeless endeavor to deny or to explain away the inaccuracies and inconsistencies of the Gospel histories. It represents them as errors inseparable from all human narrative of events, and even uses them as evidence of the absence of collusion, or set purpose, on the part of the Gospel writers. Her ministers appeal rather to the grandeur, beauty and glorious beneficence of the Divine purpose, and insist on the base ingratitude of rejecting the salvation which Divine love has thus freely offered to man.

The laity have thus learnt to view the inconsistencies of the Gospel narratives as comparatively unimportant, and as in no way impugning the main facts which they set forth. This is, perhaps, not a very rational attitude, but it is intelligible, when we remember what a strong and permanent effect is produced upon average minds by early education and the habits of a life-time. In our case this effect is strengthened by the unreasoning tenacity with which Englishmen cling to all opinions and habits which they have once learned to respect.

This attitude of mind is greatly confirmed by the facts of the case. The Christian religion is the religion of the state; it is not too much to say that it is part and parcel of the state. No public ceremony is complete without its sanction and attendance. Its bishops take, by right, a seat in the legislature. It holds immense possessions and great power, conferred by

ancient legislation. It is hallowed by antiquity, and all that is best and most honored in life is represented by, and closely connected with "The Church." Its powers extend even into social life, and, until quite recent times, every individual man was dependent upon its ministrations from the cradle to the grave.

A man must be, indeed, both spiritually and intellectually raised above his fellows before he may venture openly to throw off allegiance to the church.

Another most effective aid to its power and influence is "sentiment." It not only possesses its magnificent cathedrals, it has also its churches in every village, in almost every hamlet in the kingdom; churches in which have been solemnized the baptisms, weddings and funerals of the members of the parish for long generations; churches served by men, for the most part, devoted to their Master, believing implicity in Him, and carrying out the work he bequeathed to them to the utmost of their power; men imbued with the loving, tender spirit of the true Jesus, patient servants of the poor and suffering—and, as a rule, loved, trusted and looked up to as the leaders of all that is best, purest and truest in the life of the parish.

What wonder that such men wield a well-deserved influence over the minds of their parishioners? The great majority of these have neither the power nor the will to think for themselves in religious matters, and accept with unquestioning reverence the teaching of their ministers. How can the "squire" in the manor-house ignore the "parson," refuse to attend his services, and declare his sacraments and ceremonies to be mere superstitions, without doing grievous harm to the religious life of the parish?

What I have said above refers, of course, mainly to country districts. The case in the towns is widely different. The churches there are, as a rule, badly attended, for great numbers of the middle and working classes belong to one or the other of the many different sects of Dissenters. These sects cannot be said to have sprung into existence from any fundamental difference of religious belief, but rather from divergencies of opinion on matters of ritual and ceremony.

They are all, one and all, with the exception of the Unitarians, worshipers of Jesus and believers in his God-head. I cannot, therefore, from my own point of view as a theist, dissociate them from the established church.

A more hostile form of dissent is represented by the extreme high church party, who, although still ostensibly adherents of the established church, are, in religious sentiments, widely dissociated from her. There is no doubt that among the English clergy these "high church" tendencies are on the increase, probably, in the main, due to a spirit of reaction which hastened them, in opposition to the tide of Biblical criticism that has set in, to insist upon the necessity of a rigid adherence to the "litera scripta" of the Gospels, which, it must be admitted, lends some countenance to their assumptions. The movement is undoubtedly due to the initiative of the clergy, and but a small minority of the laity are in any real sympathy with it. It seeks to restore to the ministers of the church the personal priestly authority which our forefathers wrested from them. It may for the moment appear to be extending its influence, but it is foreign to English habits of thought and character and can assuredly have but an ephemeral success.

The true dissenters from the established church of England are, of course, the Unitarians and Theists. Of the Unitarians I will only say that they are a numerous and most important body. They have, for now some two hundred years, fought strenuously for freedom of religious thought, and have had among them some of the highest and noblest exponents of these principles.

Of the Theistic church, it behooves me to say no more than that it is founded upon the unassailable basis of the spiritual and moral nature of man himself—upon the deductions which every reasoning man should draw from the phenomena of his own intellectual and moral nature; in short, upon the recognition of God's actual work, of which we see the evidence in every individual soul that He has created, and not upon any records of His alleged words. It holds, as the primary and essential article of its creed an absolute faith in the love and fatherhood of God, and, as its main duty, to seek only the

"truth" in disregard of any preconceived beliefs, however precious, which increasing knowledge may prove to be untrustworthy.

The established church has, in short, many in England who differ from her, not only in practice, but in principle; but her position as the state church renders her, in very truth, unassailable except by a change of religious belief so universal that she will be compelled to take public steps to reform her own creeds and ritual.

An important assistance has, of late years, been given to the church by a very remarkable body of workers known as "The Salvation Army." Their mission is to bring home to the very poorest classes the hopes of salvation through faith in Christ, and there is no doubt that they have reached a class practically inaccessible by the church, and have aroused in thousands of minds religious aspirations which, without their aid, could never have existed. They are a numerous body and apparently have a considerable command of funds.

We may not agree with their articles of faith, but must admire the single-hearted devotion they have brought to bear upon their work and acknowledge that any faith which "tends to righteousness" is to be preferred to utter godlessness.

There has been a recrudescence lately in London and other towns of what is called "revivalism." Very large meetings, especially in London, have been held, which have been characterized by the usual noisy and hysterical outbursts of religious feeling. We may doubt whether any really permanent good is effected by such methods, but they all tend to prove what I earnestly believe to be a solid truth, viz: that the English are at heart a religious people, with a real preference for good as opposed to evil. That they are moreover, full of reason and common-sense, and, as the result, are capable of drawing sound deductions from facts before them. They have realized and recognized that method and purpose are displayed throughout the universe, and this has been sufficient to satisfy the large majority of them that a Supreme Omnipotent Creator must necessarily exist. Agnosticism or Atheism will never, therefore, be professed by any large proportion of Englishmen.

For the moment Christianity stands firm in England on the grounds we have above mentioned, and also because the knowledge, and the consequent freedom of religious thought, which has come to the educated classes, has not yet descended to the great mass of the poor and illiterate, and the church still rules them with a strong, though it must be admitted, a most benign despotism. It is, indeed, difficult to see how a change of creed can ever reach them, especially in rural districts, except through the ministers of the church itself.

The educated classes in England, on the other hand, are rapidly discovering that the doctrines of the church have no reliable warrant, and although they are prevented by the causes I have above mentioned from openly dissociating themselves from her, they are ceasing to attend her services and pay but little heed to her utterances.

When the youth of the present day take the place of their fathers and mothers it is certain that the defection, which is already manifest, will become much more general, with the result that the broad minded among the clergy will gain the courage of their opinions and speak with no hesitating or uncertain voice as to the necessity of a reform of doctrines and liturgies which have ceased to satisfy the reason and, indeed, the religious wants of the laity.

Reform, once acknowledged to be needful, once applied to doctrines which the church herself has learnt to be obsolete and to have lost their hold on the consciences of her congregations, can never be again arrested.

As the result, it does not need a very sanguine forecast to conceive the gradual uprising of a new church, whose main object will be the search for truth, and truth only, at all and every cost—a church that will test all supposed "revelation" in the refiner's furnace of reason and knowledge, rejecting the dross and retaining only what is manifestly holy and true; a church purged of all self-seeking, and having as the sole object of its existence the adoration of the one All-Holy God, and the leading of His ignorant children into the ways of love and peace.

THE HARVEST IS PLENTEOUS.

Francis Alger.

I was pleased to see it stated in Universal Religion that the Rev. R. A. White, of Chicago, and nearly 400 members of his society have decided to surrender their sectarian name and be known in future as the People's Liberal Church.

What Mr. White says is to the point, and it would be well if some of the liberal churches in the East could take the same fearless advance stand. But I fear in most cases that it would break up the societies.

I suppose the People's Liberal Church has dropped not only the name "Universalist," but also the more objectionable word "Christian."

The word "Christian" is used with different meanings, but historically it is weighed down with dogmas and superstitions and does not represent modern religious thought or ideal truth. And even if it be a fact that Jesus (as has been claimed by an able preacher) "enumerated and established no dogmas," but left the field clear for man to judge himself what is true, still Christ's language is so often involved in metaphorical or allegorical elements that it is most difficult, if not impossible, to determine his exact thought. Furthermore, some of his sayings show bitterness and injustice and defy both skill and charity in the interpretation of them.

A large class in every community exists without any faith in "revealed" religion, and it is useless to talk to them about the "redemption of Jesus," or to point to him as the mediator or savior of man. But I do not believe a human soul can outgrow religion, and so there exists today an immense field for the liberal churches to tackle.

Let the sermons have a broad range and not be what has technically been known as "Gospel discourses." Let the Bible take its true place as simply a part of the world's moral and religious literature, and the good accomplished will be very great.

A LITTLE PAGAN'S SEARCH FOR DEITY.

C. L. Whaley.

'Twas in the forties, for time; on the banks of the grand old Mississippi for place, and the spring of the year, for season, when a poor little pagan boy entered upon the scenes of this life. At this place the river was more than a mile wide, and the graceful little hills paused at a respectful distance to allow the majestic old river to go by, leaving quite a wide margin of rich, level bottom land between themselves and the river bank.

Upon this margin of land was his home, and here his memory cells began to register events, and they came thick and fast.

Every fair day the little fellow was out, either on the sandy shore of the river or in the woodlands adjoining his father's farm, for he was a weakling. The old doctor, the family physician, had said: "You must develop him physically before you attempt to develop him mentally or you will lose him."

Thus this poor little pagan was thrust out among the birds and flowers to obtain what knowledge he could, without books, without even a Bible! Each day he made some new discovery, with which he went to his father for an explanation.

One day he saw an old mother duck, of the kind called "tree ducks," bring down from out a hole in a large tree, one by one, her brood of yellow, downy ducklings, and when they were all deposited upon the ground at the foot of the tree, she waddled off to the river with them, where, without hesitation, they went right into the water and swam off beside their mother.

At this he wondered, and yet he concluded that the mother duck had told them they need have no fear.

While standing on the bank watching the ducks his attention was attracted by a nest of young turtles, hatching out from their nest in the sand at his feet. He noticed that they, too, went scrambling down to the water, but that, unlike the ducks, they crawled away upon the bottom of the river and disappeared.

Upon his return home he told his father of his observations and asked him how it was that the little turtles knew that they could live in the water? "I know," said he, "the little ducks might have been told by their mother, for I heard her talking to them; but the little turtles were orphans. How did they know they could live in the water?"

The father explained that their knowledge of belonging in the water was born with both ducks and turtles and that the boy had discovered the great fact of instinct or, one of the laws of God which we know as heredity.

Another day the little fellow discovered the birth of a great bird-like fly, the dragon fly, we call it, and observed the entire process of its formation.

Appealing again to his father for an explanation of what he saw he was given a helpful lesson in entomology and made to feel that he had witnessed a manifestation in nature, the law governing which we do not fully understand. Finally the father said:

"My son, you have this day witnessed one of the intimations of nature supporting a belief in the future existence of mankind. You have seen the transition from one insect to another, as in the case of the butterfly. You have seen the transition of tiny creatures from one element to another. So it may be that something of us will be liberated at the transition we call death and assume another form, even as with the dragon fly when it left the larva behind.

EDITORIAL

A POLITICAL PARALLEL.

The seven extant great religions will have to wait for the coming of the Universal Religion precisely as the thirteen colonies of 1783 waited for the coming of the one nation of the United States in 1787.

Christianity, Judaism, Mohammedanism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Hinduism will have attained a corresponding ideal union in religion when they shall have learned the same lesson of self-subordination to their higher whole

which was learned by the mutually jealous colonies in the field of politics. For it was only by this self-subordination of the thirteen, as dependent organs of the nation of the United States, as their higher organism, that the union of which they dreamed became a real fact. At the close of the Revolutionary war there was no nation in this country, only a loose confederation of thirteen independent, mutually jealous colonies. Yet in 1787, at Philadelphia, it was determined that these thirteen colonies, while retaining their independence as states, could yet coexist for their mutual good as subordinate to their higher whole—the nation. That willingness on the part of each to live both for itself as a state and for the whole (the nation) in one organic relationship, this it was that brought about the fulfillment of the dream. So when each of the seven mutually exclusive great religions shall have surrendered its claim to be the universal religion (a claim made by representatives of each of them in 1893 at the World's Parliament of Religions) and resolves to subordinate itself to its higher whole, Universal Religion, to live both for itself as an independent organ and for the organism on which it is dependent, precisely as the leaf lives for itself and for the tree; then will the Universal Church of Mankind cease to be a dream. Then will the world see in religion what it saw in politics in 1787. And the humble mission of the Tacoma and Seattle Societies for Universal Religion is to help speed the advent of that great day when all this jealous exclusiveness on the part of great religions and their sects will cease and the world move forward in one great fellowship of free souls, united in the wish to perfect themselves in all the relations of life. Such is the all-sufficing bond of union, including all whom it is possible to include and giving to each religion, each individual, its law of life, to live both for self and for the whole of which each is a part, repeating on the human plane the same process of successful and progressive living that we see in the tree.

PROF. PFLEIDERER'S NEW BOOK.

We are privileged to present our readers with part of the address delivered by Prof. Otto Pfleiderer at the "Congress of Arts and Sciences," held in St. Louis last September. The

letter granting this privilege announces the publication of Dr. Pfleiderer's latest work, "Die Entstehung des Christenthums," and informs us that it is a popular discussion of the subject and that it has been translated into English. Prof. Pfleiderer is the Coryphaeus of his department. No other writer on New Testament problems and the factors that entered into the origin and development of Christianity, can be regarded as his superior. The reading public is certainly to be congratulated on having from Dr. Pfleiderer's pen a popular discussion of a subject that grows increasingly interesting as the higher criticism of the New Testament finds its way to the strongholds of traditional Christianity. The higher criticism of the Old Testament left the cardinal doctrines of the Christian religion untouched. Now that the same critical methods are being applied to the New Testament we may look for some radical modifications of orthodox Christianity and a great forward step toward the ideal of free and universal religion. In the near future we hope to offer our readers a review of Dr. Pfleiderer's "Origin of Christianity."

NOTES FROM THE FIELD.

SEATTLE.

Mr. N. H. Nesbitt, minister of the First Free Church of Tacoma, spoke for Mr. Martin on Sunday evening, April 2nd, taking for his subject, "What Is Spirituality?" The fraternal greetings which he brought from the Tacoma friends made all present feel that the bond of fellowship between the two societies is steadily strengthening and deepening.

Judge Richard Osborn's death, which occurred April 2nd, after a protracted illness, has bereft the society of a most valued member and officer. The funeral service, conducted by Mr. Martin, was largely attended and among the floral tributes was a large and handsome wreath sent by the officers of the society. At a meeting held April 3rd a committee was appointed to draft suitable resolutions and forward a copy of them to the bereaved family. The only other death recorded thus far in the history of the society is that Mr. John W. Pratt, which occurred two years ago.

The Woman's Union held a very successful party at Wilson's Hall on the afternoon of April 12th and from the proceeds paid for the twenty-five tables recently purchased for social purposes. The hospitals-committee made a special visit Easter Sunday, carrying beautiful cards, magazines, oranges and other remembrances to the sick, contributed in part by the children of the Junior Branch of the society.

An industrial school and educational mission has been successfully started at 2831 Western avenue by two of the lady members of the society, Mrs. M. R. Dahnken and Mrs. X. Z. Cauffman, assisted by several ladies and gentlemen also connected with the society. A Sunday School was started April 9th with 39 in attendance. A sewing school and millinery class will be started this month.

The Non-Sectarian Club held its regular monthly dinner at the Hotel Washington April 12th. Fifty-four men sat down at the sociably-arranged tables and the meeting proved to be the best of the season. It was Mr. Leo Kohn's turn to preside and he performed his duties with characteristic felicity. Between the courses he called for short speeches and the responses given proved the excellence of his choice. The principal speaker of the evening was Mr. N. H. Nesbitt, of Tacoma, who for two hours entertained the club with descriptions and reminiscences of South Africa, some seventy stereopticon views illustrating his address. The club hopes to have the privilege of another such "stereopticon talk" from Mr. Nesbitt in the autumn.

The Wagner Lecture, given by Mr. and Mrs. Martin under the auspices of the Woman's Union, was very well attended and brought the Union a substantial addition to their treasury.

"**The Real Jesus**" is the title of the series of discourses to be published next month by Mr. Martin, in accordance with the special request presented to him in March that the series he delivered on the life of Jesus be put into printed form. Most of the discourses have been written out already and it is hoped that by May 15th the book will be ready for delivery to the subscribers. The cost is to be kept at fifty cents, but an additional charge of ten cents will be made for mail orders.

Mrs. E. M. Rhodes presented each member of the Junior Branch with a handsome nest of Easter candy eggs, and also

provided a supply for distribution at the Mission Sunday School of the Society on Western Avenue. A letter of thanks and a beautiful plant were sent to Mrs. Rhodes as a token of appreciation by vote of the Junior members Easter Sunday.

LOS ANGELES.

The month of March has been productive of steady growth in our membership. It has now passed the one thousand mark. Attendance at the morning services has so increased that the Fellowship has moved to the large and commodious Belasco theater, which seats twelve hundred people. The evening services are being held in Simpson's auditorium, which is taxed to its utmost capacity. Rev. J. M. Spence, of Green Bay, Wisconsin, and editor of the Los Angeles Fellowship Magazine, gave a masterly discourse, April 9th, on "Christianity Commercialized." He returns to his own church next month, but will continue to serve as editor of the magazine. The rapidly increasing size of the Fellowship is somewhat of a drawback to thorough social development among the membership. To remedy this the city has been divided into ten districts, and in these several districts, neighborhood socials will be held to bring into closer relationship not only the members, but others in sympathy with the cause. District 7 held its sociable at the residence of Mr. Dunning last week.

As a further help to bring Fellowshipers into closer touch with each other, badges have been provided, consisting of small white background buttons, inscribed in gold plate with the emblematic letter F. (in old English) in the center, and with T. and U. on either side (trustful and unselfish).

TACOMA.

Mr. Nesbitt, while unable to send formal report, informs us that progress is being made all along the line in the various activities of the First Free Church. His mid-week meeting was attended by 57 persons last week. The Sunday services are now being held in the evening, instead of the morning, and will continue to the last Sunday in June.—Ed.

LONDON.

Thirty-five years ago the Rev. Chas. Voysey, B. A., was the vicar of a Yorkshire village church. His views changed and he was proceeded against by law, eventually being compelled to relinquish his ministry in the Church of England. This led to the formation of the "Theistic Church," London, of which Mr. Voysey has been the minister for an entire generation. Over a million issues of his printed sermons have been made and every week adds to their number. The work of the church is "unhasting, unresting." No sensational methods are adopted. The local congregation is augmented by the thousand or more out of town readers of the weekly sermons, who are thereby kept abreast of the religious thought of the time. This continuous work, freeing men's minds from the bondage of the superstitions of centuries and opening their eyes to the truth that makes free, has not been without success. For, owing to this very witnessing for truer ideas and nobler views of God and his dealings, the public mind has progressed to a higher standard of thought, while in the Church of England many a prominent minister openly proclaims his belief in the doctrines for which the Rev. Chas. Voysey was so long ago deprived of his right to minister in that very church.

A marked characteristic of the Theistic Church is the personal love and devotion of its members to their minister, whose qualities endear him to the hearts of all; and indeed this applies also to his opponents in thought, for although he deals trenchant blows at false opinions he never strikes at the people who hold them.

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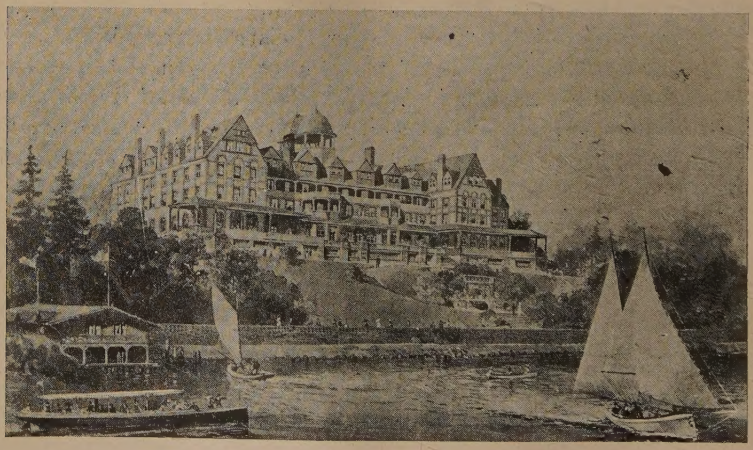

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